DOGLOGIC | CANINE EDUCATION

Positive Dog Training.

By Lynne Stephens

> Come, come!, COME!!!
> How often have you heard this desperate cry from the owner of the dog next door, or could it be that you have even been known to utter these very same words to your own adored family pet from time to time?

You know you absolutely worship the ground she walks on. She knows you worship the ground she walks on – provide her with only the best to eat, the most comfortable seat in the house and smile generously as she lovingly covers your best outfit in hair. So why then is she deliberately disobedient whenever you call her to come?

Picture the scene. Fluffy, the adored one, has been out for a wonderful walk in the sunshine with you. The birds are singing, the squirrels are there for chasing, the smells on the ground are an absolute delight. You have been happily enjoying the fresh air while your best friend has been happily enjoying her world, taking in all the wonderful aromas, without human interference for the last half hour.

Alas, however, now the time has come when you must return home. The workplace beckons, children need to be collected from school and there are a million and one other tasks to be done before this evening.

So, you call – no even sing in a pleasant and coaxing voice,
"Fluffy – come" (You know she loves you and you love her, so why wouldn't she come racing to your arms?)
No response.
"Fluffy – Come, Come!!"
Fluffy gives a passing glance in your direction.
"Here girl – come on I'm going to be late!" (Surely she realizes that it is your hard-earned wages that pay for her delicious meals and treats!!)
Fluffy, however, continues to sniff at the foot of a most interesting tree, leaving her mark, before moving off in the opposite direction.
"FLUFFY – COME HERE! RIGHT NOW! I MEAN IT – I NEED YOU TO COME HERE RIGHT NOW! I'M GOING TO BE LATE!!"

On a good day, Fluffy may reluctantly come when you utter this final, desperate plea (or was it a threat?).
Relieved (and still late) you severely admonish Fluffy for her tardy response, hurriedly attach her leash and drag her off to the car, her crate or to the

house, so that you can leave her alone and get on with the business of your day.

Does any of this sound familiar?
If so, what can we learn from this common sequence of events?

My experience tells me that, as humans, we learn little or nothing. Fluffy, on the other hand, being a creature of the utmost intelligence (Haven't we told all our friends that Fluffy is an extremely intelligent dog - she understands every word I tell her!) has learned. She has learned a tremendous amount and very valuable lessons at that. She has learned that if we call her name again, she had better hide or run off as quickly as she can or she will be shut up for the rest of the day, with no more fun to be had before evening.

If, on the other hand, you have ever resorted to trying to chase Fluffy down in these situations, she has likely also learned that if she runs away when she hears her name and the word "Come", you are likely to start playing a wonderful fun game of chase with her. So the likelihood of her coming when called lessens as the likelihood of her running off, increases.

What an intelligent creature Fluffy is! And what a wonderful trainer you are!! You have communicated clearly with your dog and she has learned quickly and easily. She now has a very good idea of how to respond to ensure the most pleasure for the longest period possible!

However, do not despair! Just as you have been able to train your dog NOT to come when called, you can most certainly teach her TO come when called. For help with this and other common training issues watch for the next article – "Teaching your puppy to come when called."

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